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JUNKET AND SYLLABUB.

A LITERARY lady writes thus to a literary gentleman, who is making a short sojourn in Devonshire: 'Do write, and tell me what a *junket* is, and how it is made.'

This is a question which we have ourselves often-times been asked; and it is one which the provincials to whom this dainty dish exclusively belongs need never be ashamed to answer, for a *junket* is a very delicious thing, and as completely a local delicacy as the rich clotted cream which is its almost invariable accompaniment. But local as is the *junket*—or *juncate*, as it is sometimes spelled—it is a dish of ancient descent, and of poetical repute, for Milton, in his *L'Allegro*, represents it as worthy food for the queen of the fairies. Duly to appreciate the merits of a *junket*, we must eat it in a suitable place and at a fitting time; and no place is so suitable as under 'the builder's oak, sole king of forests all,' in a field whence the fragrant new-made hay has just been carried—no time so fitting as the sweet eventide of a warm day in June or July.

A sketch of a little rustic party, of which I, a short time since, made one, will best illustrate what is the sort of time and place most fitted for eating *junket* and cream with full enjoyment. It was the breakfast-hour, not very early for the country, for Aunt Janet had lingered in the garden, clipping the faded heads of her pink *noisettes*, and kept us waiting, so that it was nearly nine o'clock when the good lady stepped in at the window, which opened to the ground. The fresh morning air, which had gathered up rich odours as it floated over bean and clover fields, and woods and gardens, until it was fairly overlaiden with perfumes—wafted its wooing sweetness over our breakfast-table, setting the fragrance of the strawberries that were on it in motion, and telling of sweet scenes without—when, just as we were commencing our meal, a loud ring at the outer door, followed by a hum of merry voices, was heard, and a whole flock of young boys and girls was ushered into the room. They were the little Beaumonts, the children of the vicar of the parish, and were come in a body to invite us to spend the afternoon in their hay-field, and assist in the concluding scene of the hay-making; 'And then we are to have *junket* and *syllabub* under the great tree in papa's field,' added little Bertha, as Ada, a lovely girl of seventeen, who had charge of the young ones, and acted as spokeswoman, finished delivering the message with which she had been charged. And then the whole party, down to a merry romp of five years old, and including some six or seven of all ages, burst forth with one clamorous entreaty that we would all come, every one; assuring us that the reception-room would not be too small for the party, even if

my uncle and aunt, and myself and sister, and all my six cousins, should join it; and having obtained the promise, the noisy young creatures departed to ask all the rest of the parish gentry, who, luckily, were not so many as to make a crowd, even if all, as all were sure to do, accepted Dr Beaumont's annual invitation to the festival.

Such rustic gatherings as that which was before us are never postponed to a late hour. 'Be sure not later than five,' was the injunction on the grown-up members of the village society; and a whisper soon spread among the children, that they were to assemble as soon after dinner as might be. We, accordingly, all kept as quiet as possible during the morning, to reserve our strength for the party; and about half-past three a merry band of boys and girls set out for the scene of action, and were followed in an hour or two by their seniors—all, both young and old, suitably dressed for the occasion in white frocks, light muslins, or other washing dresses, with plain cool bonnets, and, in short, the simplest gear their wardrobes would afford. The becoming was, however, I observed, not forgotten: the light summer muslins were set off by the prettiest ribbons and scarfs; and the always bright and beautiful hair of my fair cousins was even more lustrously bright, and more exquisitely arranged than usual; and I thought I had never seen two more lovely creatures than Edith and Una Darcy appeared that evening—Edith, queen-like in height and style; Una, the very personification of grace and modesty, but as sparkling in her beauty as a sunlit rivulet, which, meandering through a grassy glade, makes music for its own dancing motions as it bounds along its course.

The vicar's hay-field was a lovely spot—a fair undulating meadow sloping to a little river, whose clear waters, usually flowing in a noisy but shallow stream over the whitest pebbles, were, nevertheless, here and there deepened into pools, in which lurked many a fine trout. Its rather steep banks were fringed with many a gay water-loving plant; and in places broken away, so as to afford a pathway to the water's edge; and many a pleasant turf seat, where the angler could rest whilst his fly was floating on the wave below. At the left-hand corner of the field, a rustic bridge spanned the stream, and gave access to a flowery copse on the other bank; whilst at the angle of the field, on the right, stood a magnificent hornbeam, its gnarled and twisted roots lifted many feet above the earth, and forming the delight of the parish. There the meditative loved at early day to sit, 'and pore upon the brook that babbled by;' the lover found it a nice thing there to seat his lady-love, and place himself close by; and the boys and girls of the village rejoiced when they could get an

opportunity of a game of play at climbing and jumping on and over the many arches and angles formed by the roots. The upper part of the field had its fine garniture of trees; and the shade they afforded was fixed on as the trysting-place for the evening, and the spot where the junket was to be eaten.

We had set out, six in number of ourselves, four younger ones having preceded us; and our party gathered in force as we proceeded up the village. The village doctor, Mr Savin, with his pretty daughter Emily and his son, joined us; and we fell in also with George Beaumont, the vicar's eldest son, who had just taken his degree. Emily Savin told us with great glee that Edward had just obtained his diploma, and that 'he was now come home to help papa.' It was amusing to see the pride with which the little gipsy looked up at her tall and very handsome brother, whose arm was speedily offered to and accepted by my cousin Edith; whilst George Beaumont, attaching himself to the side of Una, we walked onwards. I am myself 'of no particular age,' so that I was not uneasy at seeing that my pretty cousins were more attractive than myself; but as I greatly delight in quietly standing by to 'mark chances,' I had plenty of amusement in store for this evening.

There is something very delightful in an out-of-door party; it is a thing so comparatively rare in this uncertain climate, that when it does occur, and go off well, it is perhaps more fully enjoyed than in countries where such amusements are more frequently obtained. There is a degree of freedom—a relaxation of ordinary conventionalities, that is enchanting. On this occasion, it was easy to see that the dispensation from common rules was in full force: the field was full of people of different ages and of different classes, but these were all denizens of the same rural village; and though there was no undue familiarity, and every one knew and kept his place, there was a frank and cheerful intercourse observable between all classes, that was very delightful. The good vicar had himself taken a prong; and most of his boys and girls, with many of their young guests, were busy raking up the grass, and sharing with the villagers, and some of their own household servants, the pleasant toil of loading it on the wagon; and many were the merry quips and jests which passed from lip to lip, and mirthful were the peals of young laughter which rang on the air.

But at length the last tuft of the scented grass was thrown up, and the wagons left the field. Then came rest after labour. Groups of fair young girls seated themselves on the newly-shorn emerald turf, under the shade; and here again was seen the superior freedom a sylvan festival affords over a drawing-room fête. It was not necessary to wait till a chair or couch was vacated before a gentleman could find himself near the lady he sought. If the place on her right was engaged, there was plenty of fine soft turf on her left or before her; and many a youth found himself that evening where he had often sighed to be—at his mistress's feet. And now coffee was placed on a table under the tree, and handed round to the little groups as they sat or reclined on the turf—the ladies with their bonnets thrown off, and their fair throats and sunny locks wholly or partially uncovered, and encircled by gentlemen and children, who were busy in waiting on them, and supplying their wants.

I looked for my young cousins. Edith was seated on the root of a tree near her mother, surrounded by a group of young men, who were all seeking her notice. Edward Savin stood near, gravely watching her—I thought with a careful and rather saddened brow—as she talked gaily with a young baronet, the heir to the property next my uncle's. He was a fine young man; and I did not wonder that Edward should feel a little anxious. But I knew better. Edith's arm had rested on mine when we met the Savins. She had not

known that Edward was at home, and a sudden movement of that beautiful arm had drawn a glance from me to her face; and although a moment had sufficed to restore that sweet face to its ordinary look of calm dignity, the glance had revealed to me a secret which made me sure that Sir James would not succeed, even if he were disposed to put in his claim, for well I knew sweet Edith's mind, and that neither wealth nor title would lure her to give her hand where her heart was not.

And Una—my merry, lovely Una—where was she? She had thrown herself on the grass, not far from her sister; and, like her classic namesake—

From her fayre head her fillet she undight,
And layd her stole aside; her angel's face,
As the great eye of heaven, shyned bright,
And made a sunshine in the shady place.

There she reclined, chatting with Mrs Beaumont, the good vicar looking on her, as I thought, with almost a father's love; whilst George was carefully wreathing into her straw-bonnet a garland of the blue wood-veitch—not more brilliantly blue than were her sunny eyes—mixed with the shining heart-shaped leaves of the beautiful black bryony. His mother took some blossoms of the pure white field-convolvulus from the cluster of flowers her son had thrown on the ground, and placed them as a coronal among Una's golden tresses, whispering, as she did so, some words which called up the rich carmine into her cheek, and made her look more lovely than ever. Presently the sisters rose, and followed by a flock of their young friends, wandered away in the direction of the little river. At first, the whole party moved along together in an unbroken band, but by degrees some lingered to gather wood-strawberries, others to cull the clustering woodbines which decked the hedge. Here, two young girls would stray away, immersed in such deep and earnest conference, as if the whole interests of their lives were knit up in the results of that outpouring of girlish confidence; there, a youth and maid stood apart. How often have such scenes as those we describe been depicted on young hearts in colours which all the events of their after-lives could never dim or efface; and according to the issue of such opportunities for breathing hidden thoughts and revealing long-cherished desires, leaving an image of joy never to be forgotten—or of woe, to remain fixed in indelible writing on the heart, even to hoar hairs and to the grave!

Una and George had lingered a little behind the rest, examining some herb or flower—for George was a botanist, and Edith and Una had long been his pupils in that most bewitching science. It is a dangerous pursuit, and I would warn all young people against it: they are almost sure either to fall into bogs and spoil their dresses, or to fall in love with the companions of their rambles. On this occasion, there seemed to be some herb of great interest under discussion, for I saw Una's fair head bent low over some plant which George had given her; and, as they slowly wended their way across the bridge and into the copse, I suspected that, whatever it might be, it was not 'love in idleness' they had culled. Edith and Edward Savin stood by the river's brink; and poor Sir James, whom Edith seemed to have chilled, was sunning himself in the glances of pretty Emily Savin and a group of other laughing girls on the roots of the old hornbeam.

And now, having nothing particular to occupy me, I bethought me that it was as well to go and have a chat with my good friend Mrs Harris, the Beaumonts' old and confidential servant, who would, I knew, be just at this time busy in preparing the junket and other dainties for the supper. And I will now redeem my promise, and tell my friends in other parts of the world what a junket is, and how to make it. A junket is a

very simple preparation of milk. A large china or glass bowl should be provided, some nutmeg and loaf-sugar placed in it, and in some cases, though not often, some wine or brandy is added. The cow—it should be a fine Alderney, for the richer the milk, the better of course is the junket—must now be milked into the bowl until the aforesaid bowl is three parts full of warm milk, to which must immediately be added as much rennet as will slightly curdle the milk, leaving it a doubtful point whether the contents of the bowl are curd half-dissolved or whey half-congealed. The great art in making junket is duly to apportion the amount of rennet, and the time of its standing before it is served. When the milk is just settled, it should be thickly covered at the top with the richest clotted cream, and then sent to table. I looked into the dairy, and saw the pans of scalded milk with their thick-wrinkled coating of yellow cream, and watched the dairy-maid skim them, and place some of the cream on the junket, and some in large glasses, to be eaten with fruit or with bread; and then went, according to agreement, to help Mrs Beaumont to arrange the supper-tables. These were placed along on the flat ground below the trees, for the shadows were now so much lengthened as to give us wider scope. There was a long table formed of planks on tressels, and covered with fine damask, for the elders; and one as long, but lower, close by, for the little ones. Both were amply spread with cakes of different kinds, fruit, cream, and a large bowl of junket on each table; every dish being elegantly decorated with flowers of all hues. There was a vacant space left at the top of the seniors' table for the syllabub, which was of course not to be served until the last moment. And now the signal for assembling was given by means of a loud-sounding bell; and soon were seen the bands of merry youngsters gathering from every quarter and collecting round the well-spread board; and surely never was a prettier scene than was afforded by that assemblage of bright young faces, all radiant with life and happiness, and most of them alive with mirth and frolic. Again my eye wistfully sought the faces of those two dear sisters. As usual, they were not far apart; but I could not help smiling at the characteristic differences in their aspect. I felt sure that each had heard that word spoken which was to seal the fate of her future life; that the heart of each was full of happiness; but they looked, oh, so different! Edith grave, perhaps graver even than usual, but calm, self-possessed, and at ease. My scrutinising eye could detect a satisfied, perhaps proud look as she accepted Edward's arm, and allowed him to place her at the table near her parents, and seat himself by her side; but to a stranger's eye there was no difference from her usual self in her appearance. But Una looked like a startled faun; and as she pressed to her mother's side, her cheek flushed, and her heart evidently thrilling with emotion, she seemed as if she thought the whole party must know exactly what had been passing amid the hazels and woodbines in the little copse; as if she thought every breath of air that meandered over the meadow was going to turn king's evidence against her, and tell them of all those precious words which still rung on her ear, and found their echo in her heart! Had I not manoeuvred a little, I verily believe poor George would have been left quite desolate. As it was, he contrived to slip into the seat he coveted, and succeeded in the course of time in restoring Una to something like her usual manner, though she was fitful and startlish all the rest of the evening.

And now came the moment of projection for the syllabub. A magnificent china bowl, into which I had seen Mrs Harris put a quantity of wine, brandy, sugar, and spices, covering the whole with rich cream, was brought into the field, and presented to Mrs Beaumont, who slipped a gold ring into it; and it was then placed

under a fine Alderney cow, which had been tethered near the supper-table, the milk from which was forthwith frothed into the bowl, mixing itself as it fell with the rich compound within, and forming altogether a most excellent article of diet, though I confess to myself much preferring the more simple junket. The bowl was then placed at the head of the table, and every one partook of the syllabub whilst the frothing state lasted. It was ladled out into cups and glasses, and handed round, the great fun of the business being to discover in whose portion the ring would be found, as, whoever it might be, that lucky being was considered as thereby pointed out to be the next who would yield to Hymen's yoke. I trembled lest my Una should get it, for I knew the sensitive little thing would be distressed out of measure; but luckily it was found in Edith's glass. She put down the unfinished portion without a word, but with a brilliant flush on her cheek as she discovered the ring in it, and evidently hoped to escape notice; but it would not do: there were too many merry young creatures at hand to allow of any such uncandid proceeding, and she was discovered, and a battery of jokes poured out on her devoted head, from which she was not soon released. However, there was too much good taste, and kind as well as gentlemanly feeling prevailing throughout the party for the jesting to be carried so far as to give real pain to its fair object; and Edith's quiet self-possession and imperturbable temper bore her scathless through the ordeal.

It was a pleasant meeting, and the cool evening air was most refreshing. After supper, we lingered round the table, and a few catches and glees were very sweetly sung by some of the party, their young ringing voices, all accustomed to join in unison with each other, sounding most harmoniously in the still evening air. Then our national anthem, *God save the Queen*, was enthusiastically sung in full chorus; and then a pause occurred, and the good pastor, rising, addressed a few kindly words to his guests. He bade them bless the Lord of the harvest, who had thus given to their use the precious produce of the earth; and after a brief but earnest and affectionate exhortation, the good old man himself raised the fine tune of the Old Hundredth Psalm, and was joined by every voice in singing the well-known doxology—

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow.

The full moon now hung in cloudless glory over us, shedding a pure and brilliant light on every object around. I observed that both Dr and Mrs Beaumont spoke a few low whispered words to sweet Una as she turned to leave the field, and the pastor, as he kissed her fair brow, said tenderly: 'God bless you, my daughter!' and I then knew surely, what I had before believed, that no obstacle to my beloved young cousin's happiness would arise from her lover's parents; and I saw, in the vista of the future, Una and George presiding in that lovely vicarage, both working diligently in their Master's vineyard.

Another festival is yet before us; for it is a well-understood thing that the vicar's servants and labourers, together with the school children, are regaled at the ingathering of the wheat-harvest, somewhat in the same manner as his richer neighbours are at the close of the haymaking, and we hope then to have our share in the enjoyment as usual in waiting on those who before served us.

I was amused on inquiring for my uncle early on the day after the festival, to hear that he was 'in his study with Dr Edward Savin;' and on renewing the inquiry an hour later, I was told that 'Mr George Beaumont had just taken Dr Savin's place.'

My good uncle is rather a quaint and humorous man, and as he issued from the interview with Mr

Beaumont, he stepped up to my aunt and said drily: 'My dear, if any more gentlemen should wish to apply for our other daughters, they will find me in the garden.'

THE RAILWAY CLEARING-HOUSE IN 1853.

At nine o'clock every Wednesday and Saturday evening, certain homely-looking carriages are hooked on to the mail-train from Euston Station. They are third-class; and English passengers marvel why such accommodation is afforded at such a time, since to no part of England can a third-class passage be made at that hour, or by so fast a train. But the riddle is solved by means of that most useful agent—competition. The steamships carry passengers very cheaply from London to Leith, Dundee, and Aberdeen; so cheaply, that no humble person would travel by railway, unless the fares were made much below the ordinary standard. To meet these circumstances, the leviathan company grant a boon twice a week: they give third-class passage by the mail-train—to Scotland only, be it observed—and charge no more to Stirling, Perth, Dundee, or Aberdeen, than to Edinburgh or Glasgow; thus can Sandy McGranite travel at mail-speed from London to Aberdeen, 542 miles, for thirty shillings—a mile and a half for a penny.

It is not to glorify the company for this boon that we write, but to make this long route a medium for illustrating an important and remarkable system. The train in question goes over one company's territory to Preston; then over that of another to Carlisle; another, to Castle-cary; a fourth, to Perth; a fifth, to Forfar; and a sixth, to Aberdeen. Each of the six companies has its own capital, its own debts, its own anxieties and responsibilities, and does not care a rush for the others, except in so far as affects its own interests. How would Sandy McGranite like it, even after making allowance for the cheapness of his journey, if he were turned out of his carriage at each of the six junctions, and huddled into another, in the middle perhaps of a semi-snooze? and yet there is nothing in the companies' statutes to prevent this. The companies do prevent it, for the mutual satisfaction of themselves and the public, at least they do so to a very great extent; and when they do not, passengers ought to be a little moderate in their anger, until they have paid some attention to the vast commercial arrangements involved in the system. Every railway-carriage belongs to some one company or other, consequently, when this carriage goes over the line of another company, and forms part of that other company's train, the owners of the carriage ought to realise a little profit as well as the owners of the line. And if a ton of goods be conveyed over the lines of many companies, something over the mere mileage-rates ought to be received by the company owning the truck in which the goods are placed.

Railway companies soon found great difficulty in keeping their mutual accounts, but Mr Kenneth Morison, who was then chief-auditor of the London and Birmingham Company, made a happy suggestion, which has smoothed away all obstacles, and has unquestionably given the public the benefit of much through-transit instead of change-of-carriage. This suggestion was, that the railway companies should adopt a system analogous to the clearing-house established by the London bankers. All the bankers in a great commercial city have every day many sums to pay to and receive from each other; it may happen that two firms have about equal sums to pay one to another, so that the actual payment is a double waste of time. This was so strongly felt to be the case in London, that the clearing-house was established in Lombard Street many years ago, for the use of all the London bankers who chose to avail themselves of its advantages; nearly all

of them now belong to it, and all contribute towards the management and office-expenses. The clearing-house keeps up a sort of imaginary debtor-and-creditor account with all the bankers. The bankers send their bills and checks, not to each other for payment, but to the clearing-house, where they are sorted and classed under the name of the firm which is to pay them. As four o'clock approaches, each banker's debits for the day are arranged in one column in a printed form, and his credits in the other; and the payment of a small sum of money, either to him or by him, may balance a complicated list of large sums.

Now it was some such system as this that Mr Morison suggested to Mr Glyn in 1841, and the practical knowledge of this eminent banker soon enabled him to see the advantage of applying it to railway transactions. The companies from London to York in one direction, and from Manchester to Hull in another, commenced the system in 1842; and it was speedily found so useful, that one company after another, as its lines came into working order, became a member of the coalition. Euston Square was the great root whence all these lines sprang; for from the very nature of the arrangements, the broad-gauge companies were of necessity excluded. By the year 1846, the railways had so increased in length, and the companies in number, that there were forty-six partners in the system; what they are now we shall presently see.

In a street near the vast Euston Station is a plain doorway, with a plain plate bearing the plain inscription, 'RAILWAY CLEARING-HOUSE.' Few passers-by ever think, or could think to any purpose, of what is done within that doorway; few would imagine that commercial accounts to a stupendous extent are here daily settled, by clerks more numerous and in rooms more extensive than those employed by any London banker. The building, wholly behind the houses of Seymour Street, has been constructed for the purpose at the joint expense of all the companies, who also bear the charge of salaries and office-expenses. The companies all elect deputies or delegates, who form, collectively, a committee for managing the clearing-house; or rather, there is a manager, Mr Morison, to carry on all the operations of the establishment; while the delegates attend periodically to see after the interests of their respective companies. That the rooms and offices are large, will be readily conceived when we say that the clerks are now (July 1853) 280 in number. There are, too, about 120 more servants of the establishment scattered over the country. These clerks have the management and adjustment of accounts reaching to nearly £4,000,000 annually!

A few details concerning each of the four departments—passengers, merchandise, mileage, and lost luggage—may not be uninteresting.

First, then, the passenger-traffic. The little cardboard tickets which railway-passengers receive are now known to almost every man, woman, and child in the kingdom. It is these with which the clearing-house does its work. Our Scotch friend, when he takes his place from London to Aberdeen, receives a ticket which he does not give up until he has reached his destination. This ticket has a few words and a few cabalistic numbers, some of which he can understand, and some not. *This ticket is sent up from Aberdeen to Euston Square.* The same is the case in respect to all the tickets which have franked passengers from one company's line upon or through another. If the journey is entirely upon one company's territory—say from Derby to Leeds, or from Birmingham to Liverpool—it is not necessary to invoke the aid of the clearing-house. The stations are now more than 1600 in number; and tickets are issued from each of these—not of course to the whole, but to a very large number of these stations. Wherever the tickets are issued, whether at a station of the Midland, or the Caledonian, or the Berwick, or any other

of the associated companies, if they frank the passenger to any station on another line, the whole of the tickets are sent up to London when they have served their purpose. The booking-office at every station is supplied with tickets, varied to an extent which ordinary passengers have but little conception of: there are tickets for the various stations—tickets for single journeys and for double journeys, tickets for the various classes of carriages; and however numerous may be these variations, the booking-clerk receives a bundle of each, and is accountable for the whole. The ingenious machine for printing consecutive numbers on the tickets, affords the means of identifying each ticket; and every day, the clerk must shew that he has either the tickets which have been intrusted to him, or an equivalent in money. So far as he and his directors are concerned, correctness is required, without much complexity or difficulty; but when it comes to be decided in what ratios the different companies are to share in the produce of the tickets, then does the extraordinary labour begin. In order to give the clearing-house the means of unravelling the knot, each station-master sends up to Seymour Street, every day, all the tickets which have been collected at that station, a list of all the tickets which have been issued at that station, and an account of the money received for these tickets. This refers, as we have said before, only to the through-tickets, from one company's territory to another. Every ticket is examined separately, and its personal history, so to speak, is tabulated in books: the company who issued the ticket is accountable to the clearing-house for the money paid by the railway-passenger, while the clearing-house is accountable for the equitable distribution of this money among such of the associated companies as took part in the conveyance of that particular passenger. There is thus a debtor-and-creditor account between the clearing-house and every one of the companies, each account comprising an almost incredible number of separate items. The clearing-house sends back all the tickets, after they have been examined and tabulated, to the companies which originally issued them; and, at the same time, an account is sent to each company of the money due to it from the clearing-house in respect to other tickets. Once a week, all the debits and credits for each company are balanced—not between company and company, but between each company and the clearing-house. When we see in the newspapers that the passenger-traffic of, say, the London and North-western Railway, for any particular week, amounted to £54,000, this is done wholly on the faith of the clearing-house: the directors know nothing concerning the amount of their week's earnings until the clearing-house has solved the riddle for them. So rigorous is the check, so even the balance between give and take, issuing and collecting, that if there be the loss of a ticket, or an over or under charge, or a fraudulent act, the sensitive commercial barometer in Seymour Street indicates at once that something is wrong; and the matter is not abandoned until the fault is traced to its source.

The extent to which this interchange of passenger-traffic is carried is perfectly astounding. Until recently, the Euston Square Company was the only medium through which London took part in the system; but on account of various junctions, the other narrow-gauge companies having stations in London are gradually becoming members of the confederacy, which now includes seventy companies, having 6000 miles of railway. There are now 20,000 pair of stations whose traffic is calculated at Seymour Street; 20,000 pair or couples of which this may be said—that one station is on one company's line, and one on another, and that each pair differs from every other pair. Twenty thousand accounts are made out periodically; and as, on an average, from three to four companies are interested in each of these, and each company requires

a copy of the accounts, there are about 70,000 large sheets filled up monthly, involving the calculation of 70,000 sums in rule of three! Considering that the 20,000 pair of stations transact business with each other every day, we may perhaps be prepared to believe, that the used-up tickets reach the clearing-house at the rate of 8,000,000 annually!

Analogous to the passenger-system is that connected with the transmission of horses, dogs, carriages, and parcels. These go with the passenger-trains, and their management is, on this account, assimilated to that of passenger-traffic rather than goods-traffic. A way-bill accompanies the parcels by each train: this bill finds its way to Seymour Street, where the travelling adventures of every parcel are recorded. If West Australian or Nutcracker be sent from London to Doncaster; if Dash or Pompey accompanies his master to the moors; if Lord Biliou sends his carriage from Leamington to Harrogate; it is in Seymour Street that a calculation is to be made respecting the amounts to which the several companies are entitled for conveying, or assisting to convey, the horse, the dog, and the carriage.

Next comes the goods-traffic. Every station, with perhaps a very few exceptions, despatches goods and receives goods every day. Sometimes the carriage is paid beforehand, sometimes in part, sometimes not until delivery; and this diversity gives one aspect of complexity from which passenger-traffic is free. All sorts of particulars, such as destination, kind, weight, charge paid or to pay, &c., of the goods, are sent every day to the clearing-house—of course, only in those cases where the arrival and departure stations are on different companies' lines—and to facilitate calculation and tabulation, all those relating to goods sent from each individual station are written on forms printed in black ink, while those concerning goods received are written on red-printed forms. As a goods-train is a 'slow coach' compared with a passenger-train, the accounts are made up monthly instead of weekly. The clerks in Seymour Street ferret out the career of every bale, box, barrel, or other package. They find that 1600 station-masters sent goods-cargoes on a particular day; it has to be ascertained what became of all of these; and this can be done only by comparing all the red invoices with all the black, and by picking out the corresponding items from each. If any cargo be isolated, if any black item be without its red partner, something is wrong somewhere, and the clerks will search it out, even if it cost the writing of a score of letters. When all has been done, and the money-receipts have been accounted for to the clearing-house, then comes the division of the proceeds among the companies who have assisted in carrying the package: something is given to the first company in payment of cartage, something more to the last company in payment of portage, and the rest is divided among all the companies in proportion to the length of each line traversed. The seventy associated companies now send upon each other's lines the almost incredible amount of 10,000,000 tons of goods annually.

The next system is the very curious one of mileage and demurrage. We introduced Sandy McGranite on his way from London to Aberdeen: we are not quite certain whether the directors will allow him to remain in the same third-class carriage all the way, but they certainly would allow such an accommodation in respect to a first-class; and thus it would be also if a passenger went from London to Berwick, going over the lines of four companies. As a general rule, the companies always do this in respect to first-class passengers, and to a considerable extent in the case of second and third class. Now, every company has a right to receive something for the wear and tear of a carriage, whether it goes over the lines of that or of any other company. How is this to be done? By a

regular manuscript biography of every carriage. The reader may perchance smile at this expression, but it departs very little indeed from the actual truth. The daily life of every carriage and wagon is recorded. At the junction stations, where the lines of different companies join—such as Rugby, Normanton, York, &c.—agents of the clearing-house watch the arrival and departure of every train, note the companies to which the respective carriages and wagons belong, and send up an entry to Seymour Street. By comparing the entries from different junctions, day after day, it becomes pretty well known where every carriage is on every hour of every day; and according to the distance it has travelled, so has it a claim out of the gross earnings of the associated companies. Not only is this the case in respect to the carriages and wagons, but also in reference to the tarpaulins or sheets which cover them: every carriage earns so much a mile, every wagon, every tarpaulin; and the clearing-house has to see that these payments are justly accounted for. But besides being actually in use, a carriage is entitled to remuneration, if it is kept idle on another company's territory: this is called *demurrage*, the demurrage being dependent in amount on the length of the detention. A railway carriage is, in short, treated with very little less attention than a living being: its introduction 'into active life is recorded; its goings and comings are narrated; the length of all its journeys is tabulated; its repose is chronicled as well as its movements; it is estimated, like any other industrial being, at money-value for what it does, and at money-value for its time when kept in enforced idleness; its life is written in a book, and this book is never destroyed. Once again we must say, that this refers to the vehicles only in respect to their transit upon other companies' lines; so long as they keep upon their own territory, the clearing-house has nothing to do with them. But so intimate is now the exchange of traffic between the companies, that the numbers of tabulated vehicles are truly formidable, amounting to no less than 12,000 passenger-carriages and 90,000 goods-wagons. Reckoning every mile which each vehicle runs upon another company's line, this aggregate mileage is now at the rate of 150,000,000 annually.

Not less curious, perhaps, is the lost-luggage department of the clearing-house. It is almost inconceivable how many articles are left in railway carriages; passengers are so eager to get out at the end of their journey, that they forget some of the odds and ends which they had placed upon, or beneath, or between the seats. Ladies, who generally travel with a more ample array of bundles and parcels, and boxes and baskets, than men, are especially unlucky in respect to these little lapses of memory. What are the companies to do? Are they to advertise every article found, or sell them and keep the proceeds, or allow the railway servants to keep them as perquisites? None of these. If luggage is found at a station or in a carriage, and if no one claims it after a certain time, it is sent to the chief station of the parent-line, where a receptacle is opened to accommodate it. Let it not be supposed that this is a trifling matter; nearly 60,000 articles were found in 1852 in the carriages and stations of the allied companies; about 8000 applications were made to the companies in respect to these articles; some were restored at the stations themselves, some were restored through the agency of the clearing-house, and some are not applied for at all. In this last case the articles, after having been retained a year or two, are sold by auction, to avoid encumbering the store-rooms.

The clearing-house occupies a remarkable position in respect to the seventy associated companies. It holds entirely aloof from all their quarrellings and bickerings. They all support it; they all contribute to defray its

expenses; they all derive advantage from it, but they must not take their grievances or heart-burnings within its walls. Mr Morison, as king of the clearing-house, looks with a dignified impartiality at the seventy. They are to some extent his patients, or his subjects, or his clients—no matter which, he treats them all alike, and would as readily whip the great North-western as the little West London, if it behaved wrongfully. If the companies will quarrel, they must do so elsewhere; but as soon as any agreement for interchange of traffic is arrived at, Mr Morison will see that each company gives to the other what is its due to the uttermost farthing. To strengthen the powers of the clearing-house in this respect, an act of parliament was passed in 1850, enabling it to enforce payment as between one company and another. Even if there be discord without the clearing-house, there is harmony within. The two or three hundred busy clerks pursue their labours with a combined energy which gives to the whole the precision of an exquisite machine; and their excellent library, and news-room and reading-room, combined with their vast business-rooms, tend to give the Seymour Street establishment an air and position of great dignity.

One word more. Some persons urge, that if all railway companies were merged into one, the expense of the clearing-house might be saved. May be so. But whether too high a price might not be paid for the advantage, is a question well worth consideration. While we are now writing, the Board of Trade issues a report, pointing out some of the grave evils which may result from sanctioning so gigantic a monopoly. This, at any rate, is certain, that—pending all discussions on the great national question of railway amalgamation—the clearing-house gives to the public many of the advantages which amalgamators so much advocate, while the companies are insured strict equity and great facility in their monetary arrangements one with another. If seventy companies, by contributing, *pro rata*, £20,000 or £30,000 annually for the support of the clearing-house, can conduct amicably their £4,000,000 of complicated dealings with each other, it is surely worth this penny or twopence in the pound on the gross sum involved.

SUNSHINE AND CLOUD.

WHEN you visit a place, whether town or country, for the first time, suspend your judgment concerning it until you have paid due regard to the state of the weather at the time. Depend upon it, your judgment will be all the better for the delay. It may be very humiliating to think so; but our opinions, estimates, judgments, conclusions, likings, aversions, are wofully influenced by a bit of cloud or a bit of sunshine. Not only so; but there is a sunshine of the body, of the mind, and of the pocket, as well as of the weather; and there is an alternation of cloud with these four kinds of sunshine. These delicate gradations of sunshine and cloud affect our judgments of men, of places, of things, and of events. Dr Johnson said, that a sudden pang of toothache would render a man utterly indifferent to the sublimest poetry, put to flight the most subtle train of metaphysical reasoning, and make him turn away from the most beautiful spectacle; this is the cloud of the body, and a first impression, while under such a cloud, ought to be watched most narrowly and suspiciously. Napoleon used to say that, before deciding any important or doubtful proposition, a man should digest his dinner, and, if possible, sleep after the subject is first proposed to him: there is much wisdom here; it acknowledges the value of the sunshine both of the body and of the mind. It is the same in our judgments of

men, places, productions, and events—bright sunshine and dull cloud, real or figurative, have so much to do with the matter, that a little delay—not dilatoriness—in judging is almost indispensable. The impatience which we sometimes exhibit at anything like delay, whether in forming our opinions or in other matters, receives a rap from Shakespeare, as do most other weaknesses. When Troilus and Pandarus are conversing, the latter says:—

He that will have a cake out of the wheat, must tarry the grinding.

Troi. Have I not tarried?

Pand. Ay, the grinding; but you must tarry the bolting.

Troi. Have I not tarried?

Pand. Ay, the bolting; but you must tarry the leavening.

Troi. Still, have I not tarried?

Pand. Ay, to the leavening; but here's yet, in the word hereafter, the kneading, the making of the cake, the heating of the oven, and the baking; nay, you must stay the cooling too, or you may chance to burn your lips.

Who has not experienced the distortion of a first opinion or impression? Who, if he fairly examines himself, can fail to see that he has suffered this twist of the judgment as well as his neighbours? As Troilus wanted the cake out of the wheat without waiting for the grinding, the bolting, the leavening, the kneading, the baking, and the cooling, so are we too apt to run away with a first judgment, without reference to its accompanying bits of sunshine or cloud.

There was once a little dog—a sensitive little dog, though an ugly cur—which was made utterly miserable by a particular tune on a particular street-organ. The organ, it must be confessed, was very much out of sorts in some of its pipes, and the tune was a lugubrious arrangement of a psalm-tune. On the days when the organ-grinder passed through the street playing this tune, the dog became irate and wretched; he howled and how-wowed; he shook his long ears, and whirled rather than wagged his bushy tail; he poked his head between the rails of the balcony of his master's house, and shewed his utmost possible number of teeth at the organ-man. In short, those were black-letter days in the poor dog's biography; and there can be no question that, owing to the animal's nervous organisation, he suffered much irritation from the particular tune on that particular organ. Many animals on two legs know what it is to suffer painfully from bad music. My friend, the sensitive ugly little cur, is brought into notice here to illustrate the sunshine-and-cloud theory. During many years, I could never hear that psalm-tune without an exciting remembrance of the organ and the dog; and my judgment concerning the actual merits of the tune was sadly distorted by the recollection of the crazy pipes which had blown it into my boyish ears.

There is a curious double or reciprocal action in these matters; or rather, there is a multiple action, arising from the number of different agencies. For not only are there various kinds of judgments to be affected by a first impression, but various kinds of sunshine and cloud to affect them. How hard it is, for example, for a poor man to judge rightly of political economy and of social institutions; there is no sunshine in his pocket, and a cloud envelops his opinions of men and things. As little can we depend implicitly on the judgment of one who is wealthy and in office: he has got the sunshine, and its rays blind him a little to some very important facts. Then take the case of a poor invalid, from whom the sunshine of the body has almost departed; how gloomy are the opinions of men and things! how frequently are the judgments of

an intelligent mind distorted! But the mind without sunshine is still worse; whether with serious maladies or with petty grievances, a mind thrown off its balance is indeed a cloudy medium, through which everything looks both crooked and misty.

The largest philosophy of our largest thinkers can hardly do justice to this subject; but it is in the power of every one to make a little useful observation thereon. Suppose we limit ourselves, for instance, to the sunshine of the mind as influencing judgments concerning scenery. There is in Leigh Hunt's writings much of the joyousness of disposition which steeps a man in sunshine instead of cloud; which leads him to pick out the golden bits and make them compensate for the gloom. He is talking about the oft-described discomforts of bad wintry weather, but he will not admit its badness. 'In the country,' says he, 'there is always something to enjoy. There is the silence, if nothing else; you feel that the air is healthy, and you can see to write. Think of a street in London, at once narrow, foggy, and noisy; the snow thawing, not because the frost has not returned, but because the union of mud and smoke prevails against it; and then the unnatural, cold sound of the clang of milk-pails—if you are up early enough—or if you are not, the chill, damp, strawy, rickety hackney-coaches going by, with fellows inside of them with cold feet, and the coachman a mere bundle of rags, blue nose, and jolting.' This disparagement of London winter, he it observed, is supposed to be passing only through the mind of the country resident, who is cheerfully enjoying a country winter. But our author does not leave the metropolitans in this dismal plight; he expatiates on the comforts even of a London wintry day, and winds up with a sentence full of sunshine: 'It is not by grumbling against the elements, that evil is to be done away; but by keeping one's self in good heart with one's fellow-creatures, and remembering that they are all capable of partaking our pleasures.' In another of his essays—*Walks Home by Night in Bad Weather*—he shews that even such a walk may be 'jolly'—as Mark Tapley would call it—if we only choose to make it so. After a bit of sunshine: 'It is a remarkable thing in nature, and one of the good-natured things we know of her, that the mere fact of looking about us, and being conscious of what is going on, is its own reward, if we do but notice it in good-humour;' he proceeds to a comment on such a walk, on the watchmen and coachmen, on the coloured lights at a doctor's door, on a poor dog which has lost its master late at night—and finds material for pleasant gossip in all of them. In another essay, he takes up the cause of the much-abused east wind: he will have it that 'an east wind, like every other evil except folly and ill-intention, is found, when properly grappled with, to be not only no evil, but a good—at least a negative one, sometimes a positive; and he insists that 'if it were not for the east wind in this country, we should probably have too much wet; our winters would not dry up; our June fields would be impassable; we should not be able to enjoy the west wind itself—the Zephyr with his lap full of flowers.'

It is valuable to observe, not only that a man's natural sunshine affects a large body of his opinions, but that his opinions on the same subject vary according to his brightness or gloominess on different occasions. Crabbe thought so much of this matter, that he devoted a whole poem to it—*The Lover's Journey*. Those who have not this poem at hand, will not be unwilling to hear how the poet works out his subject.

John takes a country ride to visit his sweetheart Susan; but he calls her Laura, and she calls him Orlando, as sounding sweeter and more romantic. Orlando then proceeds on his journey, his thoughts high and buoyant, and everything sunshiny within and without him. Never did landscape appear more beautiful; never did human nature, and four-footed nature,

and vegetable nature, display such glorious attributes. He first crosses a barren heath near the coast; but he will admit nothing of its barrenness. He finds the 'neat low gorse with the golden bloom,' and the 'gay ling with its purple flowers,' and the 'green-fringed cup-moss with the scarlet tip;' he finds similes to Laura in all of them, and to call the heath barren would be to him positively a heresy. He goes along a hot dusty lane between fields; but he neither feels the heat nor sees the dust; he only thinks of the 'rambling suckling,' the 'vigorous brier,' the 'wholesome worm-wood,' the 'dew-pressed dog-rose,' and the snow-white bloom of the thorn, on either side of his path. He comes to a bit of pasture-land where lean sheep are eating meagre herbage, where turf is piled near scattered cottages in a bleak-looking spot, and where a mill, an alehouse, and a smithy stand together; his thoughts immediately carry him into imaginary scenes of cottage happiness and village innocence; he neither sees nor knows that the sheep are 'fleshless, lank, and lean,' nor is the prospect anything 'bleak and wild' to him. He crosses a bit of fenny-land where nothing but dikes, and banks, and drains are to be seen; but he sees something more—he thinks that 'bog, and marsh, and fen are only poor to undiscerning men;' and he finds some 'rushy moor,' and 'rare moss,' and 'sweet myrtle' to rave about. He next reaches an enclosed country, where a gipsy-tent meets his view, with all its attendant dirt, vagabondage, roguery, and licence; he finds something to smile at in the 'merry rogues,' and opens his purse to them. But all this is about to change. When he reaches his destination, he finds not Laura; she is away, leaving a message for him to follow her to the house of a friend; he is not quite certain whether he ought to be jealous, but he is, unquestionably, disconcerted; he proceeds on this second journey through a beautiful country, but it has no beauties for him. He goes by a river's side, with green banks, tall willows, lovely meadows, hills high-crowned with wood, rural mansions, and village spires; but all are dull to him; he hates the proud farmers, 'strong as an ox, and ignorant as strong;' the 'vile beans' have a deleterious smell; he is shocked that deep fat meadows should be used merely to make oxen fat, that they may be presently slaughtered; and he finds some resemblance to a 'lady's smile' in all this; he is quite certain that the field-labourers are only outwardly laughing—they must be miserable in themselves. He passes through a fine park, with a noble mansion, and all the adjuncts of luxury; he is exasperated that 'for one so blessed, a thousand reasoning wretches are distressed;' but on second thoughts he will not allow that the inmates of the mansion are blessed at all, for 'man is a cheat—and all but strive to hide their inward misery by their outward pride.' He next traverses a pleasant busy town, in which the bells are ringing, and a newly-married pair are returning from church; but here his mingled scorn and pity become intense—'Married! nay, mad!'—he contemplates 'another wretch on this unlucky morn,' and he feels morally certain that the couple will one day 'behold their wailing brood in sickness, want, and cold.' However, he finds Laura at last, his ruffled temper is appeased, he accompanies her back to her home, and the selfsame scenery now appears to him full of loveliness and smiles.

If we turn from the sunshine of the mind to that of the weather, the influence will be as little disputed by any one who will take the trouble to analyse his judgments, and the circumstances which accompanied their formation. Our opinion of a place is often influenced, unquestionably, by first impressions. As I have already ventured to appeal to my own experience in respect to a propensity, a habit, an oddity, for which it would be difficult to account, so may I lay claim to the same weakness as the rest of the world in relation to the sunshiny theory. I paid my first respects to the town

of Birmingham in a thick fog, and made my first public entry into Wolverhampton under the protection of an umbrella, during a drenching shower of rain. Now Birmingham and Wolverhampton, though not among the cleanest and most picturesque of our towns, have a share of sun-bright days and scenes of attraction; yet never have those first impressions been driven away, never have those towns, on more cheerful days, been able thoroughly to conquer the somewhat gloomy and unfavourable opinions which the first visit engendered. Weymouth I first saw when the tide was in, and a cheerful breeze blowing; Margate I first saw when the tide was out, when there was a dead calm, and when all imaginary unsavoury odours were brought into play by the intense heat: you may rely upon it that my judgment of those two places would be influenced by those first visits, unless narrowly watched. Of course, it is not to be inferred that one's estimate of a place is really and permanently affected by such trifles—it is the tendency only which has to be looked at; but in some persons the tendency is so strong, that we can never rely upon their judgments until we learn the circumstances under which those judgments were first formed. An old writer, Sir William Denny, quoted by Southey, speaks thus quaintly but truthfully on the subject:—'Opinion deceiveth us more than things. So comes our sense to be more certain than our reason. Men differ more about circumstances than matter. The corruption of our affections misguides the result of our reason. We put a fallacy by a false argument upon our understandings. If the vitiosity of humour doth oft put a cozenage upon the radiance of sight, so that it sees through deceiving eyes the false colours of things, not as they are, but as they seem—peradventure choler hath given a percolation to the crystalline humour of the eye, or phlegm hath made an uneven commixture or thickness in the optic organ, or the like, by which means all is represented yellow, or all seems black—why may not men's understandings be likewise so deceived?'

Denny has hit upon it. And so have many of our old writers: they knew that sunshine and cloud affect men's opinions, and they have often told us so in vigorous English.

A PEEP INTO AN ITALIAN INTERIOR. THIRD ARTICLE.*

It is very difficult to convey any correct idea as to the state of the middle ranks of society in Italy, particularly if we do not divest ourselves of everything like comparison between them and what apparently are the corresponding classes in England.

In the first place, it must be borne in mind that no gentry exist among the Italians. If a man springs from the nobility, he has no resource in the pope's states but the church: any other profession is deemed incompatible with the dignity of his birth, as there is neither army nor navy, nor any other public service. If he belongs to the *mezzo ceto*, as it is termed, he must either be a physician, a merchant, a lawyer, a shopkeeper, or hold some meagre appointment, as an underling, in one of the government offices, the posts of distinction and emolument in these departments being usually conferred upon ecclesiastics. It is rare to find this middle class, the best educated beyond a doubt, contributing to swell the ranks of the priesthood, which are principally recruited from the families of the decayed nobility, or from the peasantry and lower orders.

In years gone by, the *mezzo ceto* bowed unquestioningly to the supremacy of the nobles, who patronised them affably in return, invited the family lawyer and physician to dinner on the saint's-day of the head of

* See No. 498.

the house, or for the christening of the junior branches. They stood pretty much in the light of client and patron, as in the days of their Roman ancestors; but of late everything has changed, and between the two orders there is now little good-will or assimilation. It used formerly to be a constant object of ambition to rise to the privileged rank; and when any one succeeded in amassing a fortune, part of it was often laid out in the purchase of some estate that conferred a title of nobility on its possessor; then gradually, through intermarriages with old but impoverished houses, the *ci-devant* *roturier* fairly established himself in his new position, and after one or two generations, the origin of the family was forgotten. Now, on the contrary, a disposition to ridicule what formerly was so much coveted seems to prevail, and men have discovered that there are other roads to distinction than through a patent of nobility; but, mingled with this spirit of independence, there may still be discerned a jealous feeling at the superior ease and polish of the nobles—a sort of innate refinement, which all their ignorance and prejudices cannot efface.

In the middle class, the absence of gentle breeding and of the amenities of society is mainly attributable to the inferior position held by the women belonging to it, or rather the low standard at which they are rated. The very tone in which an Italian of this grade passingly alludes to *le donne di casa*, is sufficiently indicative of the universally prevalent feeling of their incapacity and helplessness. Scarcely any attempt is made at improvement, and the results can easily be imagined. Nothing can be found more vulgar and illiterate than the wives and connections of some of the most scientific men in the country, or more homely and inelegant than their domestic arrangements; nothing to our English ideas more repelling than the appearance of a professor's lady slaphash, screaming at her maid-of-all-work, or gossiping with the wife of a doctor-of-law from an opposite window.

In compliment to our English name and culture, our right to the best society the place afforded was unhesitatingly acknowledged; and it is for this reason I can say but little comparatively about the habits and interior of the mezzo cetto. Perhaps this of itself conveys a better idea of the complete separation that exists, than anything else I could bring forward. With two or three exceptions, no untitled person appeared in the circles in which we moved; and with these two or three I observed no allusion was ever made to their wives and families; their very existence seemed to be ignored. Among all our acquaintances, one of those we took the greatest pleasure in seeing was a physician, certainly a man of no ordinary attainments: gifted in intellect and conversational powers, he would have been an acquisition to any society; but except in his professional capacity, it was very difficult to induce him to accept any offers of attention. We used to be glad of some trifling ailment as a pretext for sending for him—an indulgence which the low price of his visits—three pauls, about fifteen pence—rendered very excusable; and we then would have long conversations on politics, poetry, and English customs and inventions. Like all Italians of a superior stamp, he took the most lively interest in our country's greatness and advancement, mingled with a constant fear of his credulity being imposed upon, that rendered him very amusing.

One day, after talking about railways, and lamenting the obstinacy of the government in opposing their introduction into the Pontifical States, he said, hesitatingly: 'I have to-day heard something about England that surpasses all belief. A person just arrived from London has been trying to persuade me that he has seen a railway there which runs over houses. Now, can this be true?'

'Oh, he must mean the railway to Blackwall!' exclaimed one of my cousins, who, although she had never been in England, with that marvellous interest

in all connected with it I have described, joined to the diligent study of the *Illustrated London News*, and some of our most useful periodicals, was perfectly versed in every recent improvement. He listened to her animated description with an earnestness it is not easy to conceive, and at the conclusion said, with the florid diction peculiar to the south: 'Glorious country, capable of such achievements! Happy country, to have such daughters to recount them!'

It must have been disheartening to a man of this character to return, after his day's labours were ended, to a home such as his was described to us—small, dark, scantily furnished—the little drawing-room, according to the manners of that class, unoccupied even in the evening, and exhibiting no traces of books or needle-work—his wife utterly uncompanionable and uncultivated, issuing from the kitchen in a slatternly *deshabille*, to greet him with some shrill complaint against the children, who, pale, whimpering, and unwholesome, looked as if they were pining for fresh air and exercise. Such is the appearance of the household for six days of the week. On Sundays, the lady comes out richly dressed, with a dignified deportment that a duchess might envy, and slowly paces the promenade accompanied by her children, elaborately attired, and the maid-servant, whose exterior has undergone the same magical transformation.

The manner in which Italians of this rank contrive to gratify their taste for dress, would seem perfectly marvellous, considering their slender resources, if one had not some insight into the remarkable frugality of their household expenditure. No English economist could contrive to keep body and soul together in the way they do: our northern constitutions would sink from insufficiency of aliment if compelled to follow their regimen.

Let us take a peep at another family by way of illustration. It consists of father, mother, two children, and a maid-servant; and the income on which they depend for their maintenance may be estimated at from L.50 to L.60 a year. The husband holds some responsible government appointment in the Customs or Provincial Treasury, or something of the kind. Before he gets up in the morning, he drinks a cup of *café noir*, or, if his circumstances permit, he partakes of it at the *caffè*, with the addition, perhaps, of a cake of the value of a half-penny: the same beverage, with milk and a little bread, forms the breakfast of the family at home. One o'clock is the general hour for dinner. There is soup, containing either slices of toasted bread, or rice, or vermicelli; then the *lesso*, the meat from which the broth has been made, never exceeding two pounds—of twelve ounces—in weight, half a pound being usually calculated as the allowance for a grown-up person: this is eaten with bread, which holds the place of potatoes in England, and is consumed in large quantities. A dish of vegetables, done up with lard or oil, completes the repast; but I must not omit, that the poorest table is well furnished with excellent native wine, which, as well as the oil, is generally the production of some little piece of land in the country that the family possess. This routine of living is never departed from, except on *maigre-days*—when fish, either fresh or salted, Indian corn-meal, with a little tomato and cheese, dried haricot beans, lentils, and so forth, take the place of the usual fire—and Sundays and Festas, which are solemnised by an additional dish,—such as a roasted pigeon or a few cutlets. In the evening, they sup; but it is scarcely to be called a meal—consisting merely of a little salad, fennel-root eaten raw, or fruit, with those never-failing accompaniments of bread and the sparkling ruby wine, that really seem their principal support.

The head of the house does not trouble his family much with his presence; he spends his evenings abroad, either making *conversazione* at some neighbour's, or at

the caffè; or if his means be so restricted as to deny him the occasional indulgence of a cigar or a glass of *eau sucrée* which he might be led into there, he has the resource of going to the apothecary's shop, where, amidst a stifling atmosphere of drugs and nauseous compounds, a number of people congregate to lounge and gossip. The doctors resort here, and a choice circle of their intimate friends besides, and all the news—foreign, medical, and domestic—is fully discussed.

There are, of course, many amongst the *mezzo ceto* whose incomes are much beyond the instance I have just stated; some are in positive affluence, but their style of housekeeping does not vary in proportion; and the account here given may be taken as a very faithful specimen of the condition of the majority of this class.

While thus curious about the middle ranks, it must not be forgotten that in the upper there was quite sufficient difference from all one's preconceived ideas of elegance or comfort to render their domestic habits interesting. One of the strangest things that struck me as the winter came on, was the prejudice prevailing against the use of fireplaces, or, indeed, against any appliances to mitigate the severity of the weather. Horace Walpole, in his letters, says very justly, that the Italians never yet seem to have found out how cold their climate is; and this remark, made a hundred years ago, is still perfectly applicable—at least as regards the people of Ancona.

The dread of sitting near a fire, and the contempt for carpets expressed by the old inhabitants, are perfectly ludicrous: they mourn over the effeminacy of the rising generation, who, so far as they are permitted, gladly avail themselves of these pernicious indulgences. A gentleman one night came freezing into our drawing-room, and as he stood complacently before the fire, made us laugh at the account of a visit he had just been paying to the Count M——, the admiral of the port—a sinecure office, it is needless to remark. He found him in bed with a slight attack of gout, and his wife and daughter-in-law, with several visitors, were sitting round him making *la società*: the gentlemen in their hats and cloaks; and the ladies in shawls, handkerchiefs tied over their heads, and the never-absent *scaldino*, filled with live embers, in their hands. Our friend was pressed by the admiral to follow the general example, and cloak and cover himself. He declined at first, being of a very ceremonious disposition; but soon, he admitted, his scruples gave way before the excessive coldness of the room, on a northern aspect, destitute of fire or carpet; and he resumed his out-door apparel like the rest.

It used often to happen, when paying a morning visit, that the drawing-room fire was ordered to be lighted out of compliment to us, in spite of our entreaties to the contrary; the result, as we too well anticipated, after many laborious efforts on the part of the unhappy servitor, with a vast expenditure of breath—a method of ignition seemingly preferred to bellows—being invariably a hopeless abandonment of the enterprise, a stifling amount of smoke, and an unlimited number of apologies.

In the daytime, the Anconitan ladies, even of the first rank, rarely occupy their drawing-rooms, which are merely entered to receive visitors; they mostly sit in their bed-chambers until evening; and hence the formal appearance, the absence of all comfort, that strikes an English eye so much on first entering their houses. From the street you proceed by a large *porte cochère*, of which the gates are closed at night, into a court or vaulted passage, wide enough to admit a carriage. Of this, evidence is afforded by the appearance of that vehicle in dim perspective; while undoubted proofs arise, through the olfactory nerves, of the immediate vicinity of the stables. You ascend a handsome stone staircase, but rarely swept, and only traditionally whitewashed,

on which groups of beggars are stationed in various attitudes, and pause at the first floor, before a door that has not been painted for thirty years, when the present owner of the palace was married. Your first summons is unheeded; and it is not till after ringing a second time rather impatiently, you are admitted by a dirty man-servant, who has evidently been cleaning lamps, and is uneasily settling himself into his tanned livery-coat, which had been hanging on a clothes-horse in a corner of the hall, in strange contrast with a large genealogical tree in a massive gilt frame, and four carved benches painted with armorial bearings, but literally begrimed with dirt, forming its principal furniture. You next traverse a magnificent apartment—the hall of state in olden times—about fifty feet long and forty wide, still retaining traces of its former splendour. The lofty ceiling is richly painted in those fanciful arabesques which belong to a period between the school of Raphael and the decadence of art at the end of the seventeenth century. The walls are hung with family portraits of various epochs—knights in armour, children in starched ruffs and brocades, cardinals in their scarlet robes; and alternated with these are immense mirrors, dimly reflecting on their darkened surface the changes that have crept over the once gorgeous scene. The rich gilding above and around you, of the frames and candelabra, of the splendid cornices that surmount the inlaid doors, and of the ponderous chairs in their immovable array—all this does not more forcibly bear witness to the lavish profusion that must once have presided here, than do the torn and faded draperies, the broken and uneven pavement, the unwashed and uncurtained windows, to the present neglect and penury which make no effort to ward off the progress of decay.

Beyond this is the drawing-room, fitted up according to the fashion of thirty years ago, since which nothing has been added to its decorations. The walls are covered with crimson brocaded satin, as well as the two upright forbidding-looking sofas and the chairs which are stationed around; there is a carpet, but it is very thin and discoloured. Between the windows there is a marble *console*, on which is placed a timepiece; and on the opposite side of the room stands a corresponding one, embellished by a tea-service of very fine old china, and a silver *luerna*, one of those classic-shaped lamps that have been used in Italy since the days of the Etruscans; there is no table in the centre, or before the sofa, no arm-chairs, and no books. Wood is laid in the fireplace ready for us; it has thus remained since our last visit, and we entreat that it may stay unmolested.

The *marchesa* comes in to see us; she has a tall figure, but rather bent, and though little more than fifty, looks in reality much older. She takes snuff, and carries a checked cotton pocket-handkerchief; she kisses us on both cheeks, and calls us her dear children. There is some difficulty about adjusting our seats, because she wishes to give up the sofa to my cousin Lucy and me, at which we of course remonstrate; and the difficulty is not removed until we propose a compromise, and sit upon it one on each side of her. The servant places footstools before us, and brings his lady her *scaldino*. She is an invalid, and we talk at first about her health; but though naturally not averse to such a topic, she has not the keen relish for medical disquisitions which Thackeray declares is the peculiar attribute of the British female; this perhaps is owing to her ideas of the healing art being very circumscribed—not extending beyond pizans and sudorifics, the Italian panacea for all the ills of life. Next we discourse about the Opera, the carnival season from Christmas to Lent having just commenced; and the *marchesa* inquires, if we often go there, and how we like the *prima donna*; she says that her *nuora* (daughter-in-law) is passionately fond of everything connected with the theatre, but hints that she might oftener renounce the indulgence

of that taste, and stay at home to make the *partita* at cards with her. Being, however, as she herself remarks, a very amiable specimen of the genus *succera*, she does not attempt in this respect to coerce the *marchesa's* inclinations, remaining satisfied with the privilege of occasionally grumbling, and claiming sympathy for her forbearance. Then we are told of the progress of a lawsuit, which has been pending more than twenty years between her brother and herself, and can never be concluded, because the legislature admits of appeals from one tribunal to another, against the judgment last pronounced; so that these affairs are generally prolonged while the litigating parties have life or funds at their disposal. Disputes of this kind between near relations are of such common occurrence, as to excite no surprise or animadversion. Of course, we sympathise with her anxiety as to its termination; and then a turn is given to the conversation by the entrance of one of her married daughters, residing in the same street, who now comes in to pay her mother her accustomed daily visit, and kisses her hand with a mixture of deference and affection that is novel, but not unpleasing.

After the usual inquiries concerning the children and her son-in-law, the old lady turns again to us, and, for the fiftieth time, reverts to a project she has much at heart—that of arranging a *matrimonio* for one of my cousins; and again, for the fiftieth time, she is gravely reminded that an insuperable barrier exists to anything of the kind. Any allusion to controversial subjects being, by long-established consent, interdicted between my uncle's family and their Anconitan acquaintances, the *marchesa* is fain to content herself with a sigh and expressive shrug of the shoulders; and tapping me on the cheek, inquires if I, too, have such an objection to change my religion and *farmi Cattolica* as my poor cousins are imbued with. 'Ah, *carina*,' said she confidentially, 'I could get good matches for you all, if you had not these unhappy scruples!'

However, I laughingly assure her I am as obdurate as the rest, and we rise to take our leave. The same process of kissing is gone through as when we came in, and we are asked anxiously whether our *cameriera* is in waiting, as it invariably shocks her rigid ideas of propriety that we should cross the street unattended. On being answered in the negative, the *marchesa* insists on summoning a gray-headed old man, dressed in rusty black, denominated her *valet de chambre*, and confiding us to his care to see us safely to our home; she especially charges him not to leave us till the door is opened, as if some danger lurked upon the very confines of our threshold.

This is only one among the many instances of the extraordinary restraint exercised in Italy upon the freedom of unmarried women. A girl of fifteen, if married, is at liberty to walk about alone, while I have known a woman of forty—the only Italian old maid, by the by, it has been my lot to meet—who was not allowed to move a step without at least one trusty servant as her body-guard.

Our remonstrances and entreaties are unheeded, and we depart with our veteran escort: the *marchesa* is so pleased that she kisses us again, and notwithstanding her infirmities, insists on tottering across the great hall and accompanying us nearly to the door; while the dirty man-servant, after shewing us out, with an anxious perturbed expression, returns to his mistress, to replenish her scalding, give her any fragment of news he has collected, and comment upon our extraordinary English infatuation.

The old man, who feebly hobbled after us in the steep unevenly-paved street we had to traverse, was an excellent specimen of that race of servants such as we read of in Molière and Goldoni, but are now rarely seen in real life. He had lived upwards of forty years in the family, was identified with its cares and interests, and

gradually, from being the personal attendant of the old *marchesa*, had after his death assumed the same office towards his widow, who, as an invalid, required constant care. Hence his title of the *marchesa's* valet de chambre, which, singular to say, was a literal one, as he assisted her maid in her toilet, sat up at night in her room when her frequent illnesses required it, brought her her coffee every morning before she got up, and was servant, nurse, confidential adviser, as the occasion needed.

Another old man in the establishment, who held a post somewhat equivalent to the duties of house and land steward, had entered the service of the *marchesa's* father when a boy, and on her marriage had followed her to her new abode; he did not long after my arrival, and was mourned by the whole family with a degree of regret alike creditable to themselves and the departed. Indeed, the attachment mutually subsisting between masters and servants in the old families of the Italian nobility, is one of the most amiable features of the national character. Almost every family we knew had at least one or two of these faithful old domestics in their employment, who, when no longer capable of even the moderate exertion demanded of them, were either retained as supernumeraries, or dismissed to their native villages with a pension sufficient to support them during the remainder of their days. It is very rare to hear of a servant being sent away; their slatternly and inefficient manner of discharging the duties allotted to them being overlooked, if compensated by honesty and attachment. A much larger number of servants are kept than the style of living would seem to require, or the amount of fortune in general to authorise; but it appears to be a point of dignity to have a numerous household, a remnant of the feeling of olden times when the standing of the family was estimated by the number of its retainers. Many more men than women are employed, and to this it is owing that the former discharge duties we are brought up to consider exclusively devolving upon females. Besides the culinary department, which is invariably filled by them, they sweep the rooms, make the beds, and are very efficient as sick-nurses. We knew a lady whose man-servant sat up for eighty nights to tend her during a dangerous illness.

The wages paid are excessively low to our ideas, a very small sum being given in money to female servants, the amount not exceeding from a dollar to fifteen pauls a month (4s. 6d. to 6s. 9d.), and to men from two to three dollars; but then there is always a liberal allowance of wine and flour, the produce of the family estates, generally much more than they can consume, and the surplus of which they are permitted to dispose of. Their daily fare is of a description that would ill suit the taste of English domestics, even in the most limited establishment: the quantity of meat provided for each is at the rate of six ounces per day, which is boiled, and furnishes the never-failing soup and lessò. This constitutes their first, or mid-day meal, breakfast not being usual, or at most consisting of a draught of wine and a crust of bread. In the evening they sup, this repast being supplied by the *resti di tavola*—that is, remains of their master's table, which are carefully divided amongst them by the cook, who is usually a personage of great authority, having under him an assistant in his noble art, besides sundry barefooted little boys, who pluck poultry, run on errands, or idle about most satisfactorily.

It is scarcely necessary to say, that the low scale of wages and living here mentioned is not applicable to English or other foreign families: it was always understood that *forestieri* paid more than natives; and yet, with these advantages, the servants seemed to think they were scarcely compensated for the absence of the freedom of intercourse which they had enjoyed under their former masters. We were considered proud because we discouraged the system of gossiping carried

on among the natives, who allowed their servants to mingle a remark in the conversation while they were waiting at table, or to relate anything of the news of the town they might have heard. The contrast presented by our English reserve must indeed have been striking; and it was difficult at first for our attendants to reconcile themselves to it, or to be persuaded it did not really arise from harshness or displeasure. I have often thought we might with advantage copy a little in this respect from our continental neighbours, and, by treating our servants less like machines, cultivate the kindly feeling which should subsist between them and their employers; although I am very far from admiring the familiarity here described, which arises from the inherent love of talking and horror of solitude or silence, common to all Italians. I witnessed some traits of this invincible garrulity, which amused me very much. A noble lady, living next door, used every morning to hold conversations with the nursery-maid of a German officer's family, from opposite windows: the street not being more than ten feet across, it required scarcely more elevation of voice than is peculiar to Italian women, to possess herself of numerous interesting particulars respecting their mode of life, manner of feeding, dressing, and rearing their children; of the length of time this maid had been in their service; and so forth. My uncle's man-servant was detected in the gratification of a similar curiosity towards an opposite neighbour, the wife of a lawyer, to whom, from our hall-window, he was repeating the names of the *signorine* and the *cugina forestiera*, my unworthy self, with many little details of our tastes and pursuits, which apparently were received with avidity. One of our acquaintances, with more than a usual share of inquisitiveness, used, whenever a message or note came from our house, to summon our envoy to her presence, and, while inditing an answer, would ply him with questions about our domestic arrangements, what we had for dinner, whether any of the *signorine* were going to be married, and other inquiries of the same nature; which would have been considered insufferably impertinent, were we not aware that every servant entering her house was subjected to a similar interrogatory, and that nothing unfair or unfriendly was intended by it. And yet it is wonderful to notice, that the servants thus talked to, and let into all the prying weakness of their masters' dispositions, are never impertinent, nor outstep the boundary of the most obsequious respect and humility.

Strange, indescribable people! I lay down my pen and laugh as recollections without number of similar instances rise up before me; and yet the moment afterwards, when I think of all the examples of their kindness of heart and good feeling which I could almost as easily recall, I despair of doing justice to them, or of conveying any idea of the never-ceasing contrast between the pathetic and grotesque, that the Italian character presents. In all scenes of distress or affliction, their sympathy and charity are very remarkable; and it is beautiful to witness their untiring solicitude towards each other in sickness. Even young men of apparently the most frivolous disposition evince, under these circumstances, a tenderness and forbearance we are apt to consider the exclusive attribute of woman. No Italian, when ill, is ever left alone; his friends seem to think they are bound to devote themselves to him, and divide the hours of watching according to their numbers or the nature of their avocations. The case of a young man at Bologna, related to me by one of his medical attendants, who lingered for eight months in excruciating agonies from an incurable injury to the spine, was an affecting illustration of this devotedness. He had been gay and frivolous himself, and his companions shared more or less in similar failings; but, contrary to what is usually seen, after having partaken of his hours of pleasure, they did not fly from the scenes of pain his sick-room presented. They so arranged

their attendance upon him, that, out of eight or ten who were his most intimate friends, two at a time were always, night and day, by his side, ever watchful to mitigate, to the utmost of their power, the tortures under which he laboured. It was said, no woman's gentleness could have surpassed the care with which they used to arrange his bed, so as to procure him some alleviation from change of posture, or the patience with which they strove to cheer the failing hope and spirits of the sufferer.

Precisely in the same manner are frequent examples afforded of their unwearied attendance upon female relations or old friends; yet though no indecorum is attached to this practice, it would be unfair to say it is universal. In every instance, however, as I have before mentioned, the lady's sick-room is as open to gentlemen as the saloon; and there they are always found, in the hours appointed for receiving, seated near the invalid, detailing every little anecdote that can be of interest, and assuming an air of cheerfulness to keep up her courage, and prevent her mind from becoming depressed.

It is singular, notwithstanding, that all this sympathy and kindness, which never fails throughout the longest illness, should shrink from witnessing the last struggle of expiring nature, and that the sufferer so long and carefully tended should be deserted in his last moments by those most dear to him. With that peculiar horror of death which characterises them, as soon as it is evident the dying person's hours are numbered, that the *agonia* has commenced, and the passing bell has tolled, the nearest relations are not only removed from the chamber, but generally from the house, and often the priest alone remains to close the eyes, whose last gaze on earth had perhaps sought the faces of those most loved, and sought in vain.

The funeral is never attended by the relations, who are supposed to be too much overwhelmed by grief to appear in public; but the male friends of the deceased accompany the body on foot, carrying lighted torches to the church at which the funeral-service is performed. This ended, it is lowered into the ancestral vault where moulder the remains of many generations. No hearse, or carriages, or mutes, form part of the procession: one or more priests lead the way, bearing a massive crucifix, followed by the *compagnia* of the parish—an association of laymen who, for pious purposes, always give their presence on similar occasions. They are preceded by the banner of their confraternity, each parish having a different emblem—such as, a *Mater Dolorosa*, the Annunciation, or the Descent from the Cross—and a peculiar dress, consisting of a loose robe of scarlet, blue, or yellow. With torches in their hand, and chanting the accustomed *himne de'morti*, they produce an impression not easily forgotten. These are followed by different brotherhoods of monks, of the orders most protected by the deceased; and according to their number may be estimated his rank and possessions. Then comes the coffin, borne upon the shoulders of men shrouded in those awe-inspiring peaked cowls, with slits for the eyes, so familiar to us in all pictures of religious ceremonies in Italy: the ends of the richly embroidered pall are held by the most intimate friends, followed by the rest of the acquaintances; while the whole is closed by a motley crowd of all the beggars in the town—men, women, and children—who always flock to a funeral of distinction, to offer their prayers for the repose of the soul of the departed, and to receive the alms which are invariably accorded them.

Mourning is much less frequently worn than amongst us—in fact, only for the very nearest relations; but, when adopted, it is united to that retirement from the gaieties of society and subdued deportment which should certainly be its accompaniments; hence one never sees in Italy the indecent spectacle of a lady at a ball

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resplendent in jet ornaments and black crape, which foreigners remark with astonishment is often witnessed in England. After the death of a parent, it would be considered very indecorous to be seen in any place of amusement until a year has elapsed. I remember hearing a young man censured for dancing at a small party ten months after he had lost his father.

Widows do not wear any peculiar costume, but are simply expected to dress in black and live in retirement for a year. In a country where the deepest affections are rarely connected with the marriage state, and where no conventional prejudices exist as to the width of a hem or the depth of a border, this is far more natural, and sometimes permits of the wearer's real feelings being discerned, by the appearance of the dress assumed on such occasions. Parents do not put on mourning for their children, which strikes one as more strange, considering the strong affection generally existing towards their offspring; and it also appears customary to endeavour to shake off the grief attendant on this loss by every expedient. I have seen an old man at the Opera not a month after the death of his grown-up son, and was told it was right and necessary he should have his mind diverted; and the same plea was brought forward to justify the similar appearance of a lady in her accustomed box, dressed in all the colours of the rainbow, only a few days after the death of her sister's husband; the poor widow being plunged in all the first bitterness of grief, as genuine and profound as it has been my lot to witness. So far from perceiving any impropriety in this action, if asked how she could have the heart to visit any scene of amusement at such a moment, she would have replied, that her sufferings had been so great, she required some distractions for the benefit of her health; and this reason, by her countrypeople at least, would have been considered perfectly satisfactory.

BLANKS OF THE AUSTRALIA LOTTERY

The prizes of the Australia lottery are of dazzling magnitude. One labourer, of only eight months' practice at the gold-fields, is described as having £24,000 in the bank at Melbourne. Where some twelve millions are found in a year, chiefly by rough labouring-men, it must be that some surprising changes of fortune will take place. At the same time, it is fully ascertained that even in the most productive gold-districts, great numbers of vigorous industrious men toil for weeks and even months, almost in vain, while others realise barely enough to afford them an ordinary remuneration for their time and labour. The estimated average gains of the whole are only an ounce of gold a week, value rather more than £3; an income positively below that of an artisan in England, when the difference in the cost of living in the two countries is taken into account.

The extent and productiveness of the gold-fields are allowed to be very great—indefinite, it may be said; but then it is not every body that can dig for gold. All accounts concur in describing the work as rough, severe, and uncomfortable to an extraordinary degree. Few men are *coarse* enough for it. Think of a continual digging of wells in a compact clayey soil, sometimes to fifty feet deep, with great lateral excavations, and all the horrible toil of fixing up boarding and supports, and shaling out the constantly accumulating water; all this without the cheer and comfort of a decent home or tolerable fare! Verily, it is not surprising to hear of thousands upon thousands taking just a look at the diggings, and then turning away from the work in utter despair.

Meanwhile, under the attraction produced by the very idea of so much gold, a vast stream of people is continually passing from the mother-country to this wonderful colony of Victoria. The population of Melbourne in 1851 was doubled in the course of 1852.

Scarcely a day fails to bring fresh hundreds. On one day, near the end of last April, 2400 people landed at the port just mentioned—a fact probably unexampled. This exodus—to use a favourite phrase of the day—has brought to a pause in England an increment that has now been going on at a rapid rate for sixty years. On a spot where, fourteen years ago, there was harboursage only for the kangaroo, we have now a town as populous as Dundee or Southampton. But such a town! In one word, there are not houses for half the people, and food is at famine-prices.

It is quite startling to hear of what a decent family may subject itself to in attempting to make a new home in Australia. One very respectable family-man thus writes to us regarding his voyage in a Liverpool ship:—"When we got into fair weather, the misrule and disorder in the vessel kept us in a most unhappy state. The captain's whole attention was devoted to making money by the sale of spirits and other articles. A great number of the passengers being in a state of continual drunkenness, there was fighting and rioting without end. . . . The agents had put such an insufficient quantity of everything on board, that in a very short time we were out of many things; such as butter, suet, sugar, beef, and pork. In fact, for some weeks we were reduced to bread and water, with pea-soup for dinner, made with water only. All the arrangements shewed that nothing but imposition was intended. When full-priced passengers could not be had, they had taken them in at any price; and hence I had, next berth to me, a low Irishman with his family, who had not paid above half of what I did, and whose squalid condition and filthy habits were a source of great annoyance to us. . . . The sexes were mixed up in the ship in utter disregard of decency."

Then as to the landing: the unfortunate emigrant, being brought into the river, requires to pass with his luggage into some lighter vessel, and then to land, and have himself and belongings transported to the town in a wagon. The charges for these services are enormous; and, after all, the goods are probably spoiled by the way in which they are treated, it being quite common to toss valuable packages into mud-holes, where they lie till they are soaked through and irretrievably ruined.

The poor man is at length in Melbourne, and can hardly get either shelter or food. A humble meal at a cook's shop costs him 12s. He cannot get a single room to lodge in under £2, 10s. a week. He eagerly wishes to be gone to some of the gold-fields, and finds that the poorest horse to carry him thither will cost him £200, and not be supported on the way under £2 a day. If he is a carpenter, mason, or simple labourer, he is sure of employment at high wages where he is; but if he is a gentleman, a scholar, or a shopman, he is likely to linger in idleness till his capital is exhausted, and he is on the borders of destitution.

It appears that there is a population of about 8000 persons in what is called Canvas Town—a sort of extempore city of tents near Melbourne—and nearly all of these are persons of the middle and upper classes, who, having failed to obtain suitable employment, are gathered there to starve in company. To borrow the vigorous description of the *Times*—"Canvas Town exhibits all the dirt, all the squalor, and all the grotesque misery of the oldest and most poorly-inhabited quarters of ancient cities, together with repulsive features entirely its own. Every tent has something to sell, and that something often ludicrously and miserably incongruous with the present position of its owner. At one place you meet with a pianoforte, the last relic of some happy home deserted for the wild dreams of fairy gold; at another, a few Greek or Latin books, the last treasure of a scholar, which nothing but the direst necessity could induce him to part with; these memorials of another and more refined state of existence being blended with other objects which tell equally

forcibly of the present. Rickety bedsteads, discoloured bedding, here a rusty fryingpan, there a battered chest of drawers, ragged curtains, mildewed finery, spread their attractions to the passer-by. It is the sea-beach at the entrance of this new world, on which the tide has thrown and piled up the sea-weed, to moulder and perish between the land and the water. While the "boots" at the neighbouring inn is in the enjoyment of a comfortable income of £1600 a year—while the cabmen will not stir under a guinea a mile—while every one who can and will work may make almost any terms he pleases with his employer, here is this wretched mass of misplaced talents, knowledge, and accomplishments pining away in poverty, in idleness, and in want, dividing its aspirations between the gold-fields, in pursuit of which it came, and the home which it has left, till it squanders in hopeless inaction its energies and resources, and ends by being incapable of reaching either the one or the other.

The condition of these unfortunates has attracted philanthropic attention in Melbourne, and we find that some Christian people are pleading, in the first place, with the dwellers in tents to dispose them to submit to do anything for an honest livelihood; and in the second place, with the suddenly-enriched *navvies* and other hard-workers of the town, to abate the prejudice they have against taking gentlemen and ladies into menial employment in their houses! Such are the social anomalies brought about in this colony by the late extraordinary events. Another very odd one should not be overlooked: anything like the garb of a gentleman insures a man against robbery. The attentions of depredators are exclusively bestowed on the rough-looking fellows who reel about from one public-house to another with their gold-belts round their middle.

While all must feel what a great fact is the discovery of the gold of Australia, one cannot but deplore that it is attended with so many drawbacks: rascally ship-speculators cheating their passengers—scores of foolish men tempted into debauchery that a skipper may make a profit by it—misery incurred through wretched miscalculations and false pride by thousands of well-meaning people—hard work and no small danger to life incurred by others, for a reward which they are content to squander away in the lowest sensual indulgences. It is not, however, our part at present to moralise on such matters. What we aim at is merely to raise a voice of warning amongst our readers, as to the danger of injuring rather than improving their circumstances, by emigrating to Australia. Let all in particular above the hardest labourers be assured that the auriferous province is no field for their exertions.

THINGS TALKED OF IN LONDON.

September 1853.

THANKS to Lord Palmerston, the days of intramural burial, so far as London is concerned, are numbered: some of the foul grave-yards are already closed, others are taking in their last instalment of mortality, others have received due warning that their turn will follow; and before another twelve months have passed, our undertakers will no longer lie under the reproach of burying the dead among the living. It is a great reform, one that we may hope to see followed by others not less beneficial. Smoke has a year's respite; but in August 1854, no steam-boat and no furnace in all the metropolis is to be allowed to darken and defile the atmosphere with sooty fumes. The prevention of smoke being only a question of a little expense, and sure to more than repay itself, this seems entirely a case where a gentle compulsion will in the long-run be thankfully acknowledged. That we cannot be too clean, no longer admits of question. Our medical men are pointing to Copenhagen, where, in eight weeks, more lives were lost by cholera, than in

the late three years' war with Holstein. The mortality has awakened the authorities of the Danish capital to the fact that their city has too much squalor, too many shameful nuisances, and that the lower classes are too fond of strong drink. In Berlin, the Building Police have just issued a regulation, that no room intended for habitation shall be less than eight feet in height; that no deeply-sunk cellars shall be inhabited; that the rooms in newly-built houses shall not be occupied till nine months after they are finished; and that every house shall have a courtyard of at least seventeen feet square. As regular inspections are to take place, with power to suppress whatever may be found unwholesome, it is thought that a large mass of statistics will be collected, throwing light upon the causes of death.

These matters are much talked about, and not less so the measure for the suppression of betting-houses, to take effect next December. Weak-minded people ought to rejoice at being thus deprived of a temptation in too many instances fatal, and knaves that they have an inducement the less to refrain from honesty. It is more than probable that some 'dodge' will be got up for the evasion of the law, and it will be curious to note the form it takes. Some folk do not like to be forced to be moral, and it is rather unfortunate that prosperity puts so many at a loss to know what to do with their money. While mining-shares are in the market, no one need stint himself of tantalising or exciting investments. There are certain new projects, too, more especially addressed to the notice of the sedate sort. The 'Patent Printing Machinery Company' intend to make books cheaper and better than ever. 'The Cosmos Institute,' supported by a number of noble, learned, and reverend names, taking the great globe as a nucleus, is to enlarge the capacity and capabilities of the establishment in Leicester Square, by covering 'nearly the whole area with suitable buildings, embracing large rooms and galleries, in which shall be arranged the characteristic costumes and productions of every nation and tribe in the world; in other words, to establish a Museum of Mankind.' This is an ambitious scheme; but there is no doubt that, if faithfully carried out, the result would be most interesting and instructive; and with this in the centre, and the Panopticon on one side, knowledge and science would be not unworthily represented in Leicester Square. There is to be also an 'Assyrian Society,' with Prince Albert at its head, to collect a fund for the promotion of further researches in the East. Much as Mr Loyal has collected, it appears to be little more than a mere beginning; and part of the plan is to explore different portions of Babylonia, as well as the ruins of Assyria. The promoters say: 'There is good reason to believe that antiquities will be brought to light still more ancient than any yet discovered.' And they add, that, 'owing to the overflowing of the banks of the Euphrates, vast marshes are now forming in South Mesopotamia, which threaten ere long to destroy many of the remains entirely. Some, indeed, are already under water and inaccessible; but others are still free, and will undoubtedly, upon examination, furnish relics of the first importance. It is confidently believed that the whole history of Assyria may be restored to a very early period, and that discoveries of the most important character are yet to be made in connection with the literature and science of the Assyrian people. Here is promising work, and in a most interesting region. It is well that we are to have the Great National Institute at Kensington, as ample space will be needed for the bestowal of the relics after they have been disinterred.

Knowledge must be increased; and the city talks of facilitating the means by a Mercantile and Maritime College, not to be a mere educational establishment for

youth; but 'so arranged in its several departments, as to bring together in one focus a complete combination of theoretical and practical information bearing on mercantile and maritime affairs.' Let the city do this, and it will have done a good work; one, however, which might have been done long ago, had Sir Thomas Gresham's liberal ideas been faithfully carried out in practice. It is impossible not to perceive the growing conviction, that the whole of our policy must be directed by continually enlarging views—be it political, commercial, or educational. One effect of this is to produce a belief that patents are, on the whole, not beneficial, and that such things as patents ought not to exist. It will take some time to indoctrinate the public mind with this opinion, even if it is the right one.

Some of our learned and scientific societies are already advertising the curriculum for their winter sessions, and all with a show of widening their sphere of action. The Board of Trade evidently wishes to make its art and science department at Marlborough House as useful as possible, for lectures in both branches are to be resumed, as also at the School of Mines in Jermyn Street; and in October there is to be formed 'a class for the instruction of schoolmasters and teachers, in parochial and other schools, in elementary free-hand drawing, practical geometry, perspective, and drawing from models.' This is clearly a move in the right direction, and if schoolmasters only fall in with it, we shall some day have drawing-schools in all our country villages; and, further, we shall see what hope there is of art becoming really naturalised among us. Herefordshire seems to be anticipating the movement, for there the dean, in conjunction with a well-known M.D. has offered money-prizes, varying from L.2 to L.5, to the pupil-teachers in that county who come off best in the examinations; to artisans of the drawing-schools; and to the schoolmasters who prove themselves most knowing in the 'science of common things.'

Certain of our horticulturists are talking about the *map beans* brought from China, and presented to the Botanical Society of Edinburgh: it appears that they—the beans, not the horticulturists—have really some of the properties of soap, and they are found to be particularly useful in the cleaning of plate. Mr Stevenson has contributed somewhat further to our knowledge of the *aurora*: he finds a connection between this phenomenon and the formation of clouds, chiefly cirri and cirro-stratus, and shews how such reflect light, and how that, when the wind is high and the sky clear, there is a degree of luminosity in the atmosphere. He once saw 'all the space which the aurora had occupied covered with compact, luminous, and fibrous cirri, the aurora having passed by degrees into this congeries of cirrous clouds.' These views may shortly be tested by observation, for we seldom fail to have appearances of aurora about the 17th November. Those who wish to make themselves acquainted with the phenomena of the eclipse of the sun in July 1851, will find all they want in the volume of *Memoirs* just published by the Astronomical Society. It contains the narratives of a number of observers, describes with great exactitude the coming on and passing away of the darkness, gives drawings of its effects, and of the rose-coloured protuberances. It is a volume to interest the general reader as well as the savant. With respect to the red prominences, about which there has been of late so much speculation, we may hope to know something more concerning them, for they are to be regularly watched by a set of observers in Switzerland.

The Report of the Zoological Society tells us; that the visitors to their gardens in the twelve months ending with their August anniversary, numbered 240,738, being 53,000 more than in the previous year. The reduction of the admission-fee on Mondays from a shilling to sixpence, has doubtless something to do with the increase. Our antiquaries have something to say

about the recent excavations at Cumoe, where a large number of tombs have been discovered, and a hundred of them opened, bringing to light many most interesting objects of ancient art. Among them is a vase, three palms in height, nearly 3000 years old, which, though broken into 200 pieces, has been skilfully, some say wonderfully, restored. The sensation created at Naples by the discovery is so great, that archaeologists have heard of it all over Europe: the digging up of the shield of Achilles on the site of Troy would hardly excite greater astonishment. The Syro-Egyptian Society have been sitting in judgment on Mr Layard's researches, with a view to elicit further proofs; and the Royal Society of Literature have had some discussion about the Queen of Sheba, their object being to ascertain from what place she really set out to pay her visit to Solomon, as, according to Colonel Rawlinson, the determination of the fact would clear up some points in Assyrian history. Most interesting of all, however, is the news from the colonel, just published by the Asiatic Society. He writes, that he prepared and sent off some months ago a careful narrative of his proceedings, but the mail was 'plundered on its way by the Anezeh Arabs, and the whole of the foreign correspondence distributed among those marauders, who are said to be now wearing the unknown Babylonish characters as amulets.' In the brief account since forwarded, we read of the discovery of additional historical records, which fill up gaps in the former results; and of a splendid ruin, named Abu Shahrein, in Southern Chaldea, 'apparently full of marbles and sculptures.' Thus another mine of antiquities appears to be opening; but besides this, Colonel Rawlinson describes what he calls his 'real treasure-house of discovery;' he says: 'I have found fragments of alphabets, syllabaries, and explanations of ideographic signs. In one place, a table of notation, giving the phonetic readings of all the signs, and shewing that the Assyrians counted by sixties, as well as by hundreds, in exact agreement with the *soos, sar, and ner*, of Berosus. Among the tablets, there are also geographical dissertations, explaining the ideographic signs for countries and cities, designating their products, and describing their position; the same with the principal Asiatic rivers and mountains. Again, there are treatises on weights and measures, divisions of time, points of the compass, &c. There is an almanac for twelve years, which seems to form a cycle like that of the Mongols; lists of stones, metals, and trees; also astronomical and astrological formula without end. I suspect, likewise, there are veritable *grammars and dictionaries*. The whole collection is in fragments; but it gives us a most curious insight into the state of Assyrian science, while Greece was still sunk in barbarism. . . . Altogether,' adds the colonel, 'I am delighted at the splendid field now opening out. The labour of carrying through a complete analysis will be immense, but the results will be brilliant.' It may be mentioned here, that the Asiatic Society have issued a volume containing a complete copy of the Behistun inscription in the arrow-head character, with the same in Roman, and a translation. It is altogether a philological work, but one of great value to the student of the old mysterious literature of the East.

The Crystal Palace Company are going to build hotels for first, second, and third class passengers—the accommodation and charges of course to correspond. It is quite time that the same should be done in other parts of the country as well as at Sydenham: there is no doubt that it would pay. Mr Whishaw has invented a new lock, the action and security of which depend on electro-magnetism; the apparatus can be applied to all the locks in a house, so as to open or close them all at once. The Eastern Steam-navigation Company are going to renew the endeavours for direct steam communication with Australia with vessels of 10,000 tons and 2600

horse-power, to carry 500 first-class passengers, besides seconds and thirds. They believe that steamers of this large size and tonnage will enable them to overcome the impediments that have proved so fatal to former attempts; and they promise to take eighteen months to build their first ship. The returns of the Emigration Commissioners shew that, in the spring quarter of the present year, there sailed from all the ports of the United Kingdom, 115,959 emigrants, of whom more than 78,000 went to the United States, and 20,000 to Canada.

Among the most interesting meetings in London since we last wrote, is that which was held at the London Tavern, to promote a subscription for a testimonial to Mrs Chisholm. The labours of this heroic woman in the cause of humanity brought out acknowledgments of the most cordial nature from Mr Sidney Herbert, Mr Robert Low, and other eminent persons, and were honoured on the spot by the gathering of a very large sum. There seems to be but one feeling possible on the subject—namely, that Mrs Chisholm is eminently worthy of public veneration. Strange to say, while so much above all worldliness in the aims of her life, she is a remarkably practical person, all the details of her plans for the benefit of emigrants and colonists being cared for and wrought out in the most effective manner.

Although theatricals scarcely lie within our province, we cannot overlook a further effort of Mr Charles Kean for the elevation of the drama, in his production of Byron's *Sardanapalus*, with a *mise en scène* wholly borrowed from Mr Layard's discoveries. This entertainment is, therefore, one of the most instructive character, bringing the Assyrian court into life, as it were, before our living eyes. The effect is impressive, and even affecting, to a high degree; and we are sincerely glad to learn, that the great outlay and labour of the ingenious manager and his accomplished partner are likely to be amply rewarded. Such performances are, in theatricals, analogous to 'high art' in comparison with conversation-pieces and portrait-painting.

COMPULSORY VACCINATION.

The proportion of deaths from small-pox in London is three times, and in Glasgow six times, what it is in Brussels, Berlin, or Copenhagen. Of each 1000 persons who die in England and Wales, 22 die of small-pox; of each 1000 persons who die in Ireland, 49 die of small-pox; while of each 1000 persons who die in Lombardy, 2 only die of small-pox. The proportionate mortality, then, from small-pox in England and Wales is eleven times, and in Ireland, twenty-four times, greater than it is in Lombardy. Whence comes this difference? In England, those who please take their children to be vaccinated; in Lombardy, vaccination is compulsory. The proportionate mortality from small-pox in England and Wales is three times greater than what it is in any country in which the inhabitants are compelled by law to have their children vaccinated. These are great facts. In our metropolis, 1000 persons die annually of small-pox: if vaccination were compulsory, it is indisputable that the number of deaths from this disease in London would be reduced to 200 or 300 per annum. From 600 to 800 persons thus die yearly in the metropolis alone, whose lives might be saved by an act of parliament.—*Medical Times and Gazette*.

BLACK-BERRY WINE.

It may not be known to many of your subscribers, that they possess in the black-berry, grown so unwillingly by them in their fields, the means at once of making an excellent wine and valuable medicine for home use. To make a wine equal in value to port, take ripe black-berries and press them, let the juice stand thirty-six hours to ferment, skim off whatever rises to the top, then, to every gallon of the juice, add a quart of water and three pounds of sugar (brown sugar will do), let this stand in open vessels for twenty-four hours, skim and strain it, then barrel it until

March, when it should be carefully racked off and bottled. Black-berry cordial is made by adding one pound of white sugar to three of ripe black-berries, allowing them to stand for twelve hours, then pressing out the juice, straining it, adding one-third part of spirit, and putting a tea-spoonful of finely-powdered alspice in every quart of the cordial, it is at once fit for use. This wine and cordial are very valuable medicines in the treatment of weakness of the stomach and bowels, and are especially valuable in the summer complaints of children.—*Southern Planter*.

LIFE AND DEATH.

'WHAT is Life, father?'—'A Battle, my child,
Where the strongest lance may fall—
Where the wariest eyes may be beguiled,
And the stoutest heart may quail—
Where the foes are gathered on every hand,
And rest not day or night;
And the feeble little ones must stand
In the thickest of the fight.'

'What is Death, father?'—'The Rest, my child,
When the strife and the toil are o'er—
The angel of God, who, calm and mild,
Says we need fight no more—
Who driveth away the demon band,
Bids the din of the Battle cease,
Takes the banner and spear from our falling hand,
And proclaims an eternal Peace.'

'Let me die, father! I tremble, and fear
To fall in that terrible strife!'—
'The Crown must be won for Heaven, dear,
In the Battle-field of Life.
Courage! thy foes may be strong and tried,
But He loveth the weak and small;
The angels of heaven are on thy side,
And God is over all!'

ADELAIDE.

APPLES FOR MILCH COWS.

Five minutes ago, a gentleman, who deals in facts and figures, as well as fine cattle, informed us that he had fed out last winter more than 200 barrels of sweet apples to his milch cows, and that the increased quantity and richness in quality of the milk paid him better than any other use to which he could have applied them. He states that he is raising trees annually, for the purpose of growing apples for stock. Another important statement of his is, that since he has fed apples to his cows, there has not been a case of milk-fever among them.—*N. E. Farmer (American)*.

REPOSITORY OF TRACTS.

Inquiries have been made by various persons, whether the cheap publication lately commenced, under the title of CHAMBERS'S REPOSITORY OF INSTRUCTIVE AND AMUSING TRACTS, is a re-issue of the MISCELLANY OF TRACTS, published a few years ago. It therefore becomes necessary to state, that the REPOSITORY is an entirely new work; it resembles the MISCELLANY only in name and price; the matter is new, and prepared on purpose. A Number appears every week, a Part every month, and a Volume, neatly done up for the pocket, at the end of every two months. Six volumes (1s. each) have now appeared.

Part XII. just issued, price 5d.

The Twenty-second Volume of CHAMBERS'S POCKET MISCELLANY, price 6d., is now published. Of this work, designed as a Literary Companion for the Railway, the Fireside, or the Bush, a volume appears every month, and may be had of all Booksellers.

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